

winter for duck shooting. In spring, when the ducks have gone, the lagoons are allowed to dry out and waders are then able to feed in the shallow water and along the muddy margins. The area is surrounded by small-scale agriculture where families grow tomatoes and other vegetables. Water Buffalo are grazed on rough grasses (they contribute milk to make the local cheese *mozzarella di bufala*), and interesting birds can be seen such as Red-legged Falcon, Spoonbill *etc.* The catching is mainly by mist-net set over the lagoons and is most effective in the evenings.

We expect to be staying in a house near the lagoons where food and lodging will be free. Tigh waders, windproofs, lamps and mosquito protection will be necessary. It would be helpful to bring a sleeping bag, and anyone willing to bring some fine mist-nets (full height and single panel) and other ringing and measuring equipment for the duration of their stay would be most welcome. Members of GIL will meet visitors and take them to the camp.

For further details please contact: Dr Sergio Scabba, via Posillipo 276/2, 80123 Napoli, Italy.

UK PHONE NUMBERS HAVE CHANGED!

From 16 April all UK phone codes have changed, with the addition of an extra '1' in front of the area code (if dialling or faxing internationally). Thus + (0)XXX XXXXXX becomes +(0)1XXX XXXXXX.

If you cannot get through, now you know why!

ARCTIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Nick Davidson's paper on the different means of assessing breeding conditions for arctic waterfowl in this *Bulletin* (pp. 47-52) highlights a number of ways of improving international collaboration in data collection and developing international standard field methodologies. This

topic has been discussed recently as a key need in workshops of the IOC in August 1994, at IWRB's Anatidae 2000 Conference in December 1994 and of course during the October 1994 WSG Workshop on estimating breeding success of waders. It is also directly applicable to needs under the draft African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement of the Bonn Convention.

Initial discussions have been held with the existing Russian wader monitoring scheme (co-ordinated by Dr P.S. Tomkovitch at the Zoological Museum of Moscow University; see page 46 this *Bulletin*), Canadian Wildlife Service arctic bird monitoring (Dr R.I.G. Morrison and others, CWS Ottawa), and the IWRB Goose Research Group (Dr. J. Madsen, Danish National Environmental Research Institute) and a number of arctic biologists.

As a first step to establishing a co-ordinated pan-arctic scheme, we are including with this *Bulletin* a pilot questionnaire aimed at collecting different aspects of information about breeding conditions for waterfowl in the arctic. The form is in two parts.

The first section (included here) aims to summarise general information on environmental conditions and locations where field studies have been undertaken. The second part of the form, produced in different versions for different parts of the arctic and available on request, enables more detailed information on the breeding success of individual species to be recorded.

We would greatly appreciate feedback and completed forms from those active in arctic fieldwork so that we can assess optimal means of collecting this information.

At this stage we would be interested in completed forms not only from the 1995 field season, but also from previous years including expeditions that may already have published material elsewhere.

In the light of the response, it is probable that WSG will aim to establish a joint international venture to collect such information on an annual basis. The intention is to establish a database of returns which

will be freely accessible to all, as a research and conservation tool. We are clearly some way from this ideal but the pilot survey is a first step.

The Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Working Group (representing the arctic nations) are currently considering co-ordinated environmental monitoring mechanisms. One of CAFF's initial exercises has been the compilation of an arctic seabird colony register, but CAFF has not yet developed similar information bases for arctic waterfowl. The long-term establishment of such international monitoring could be undertaken through CAFF and we will be exploring this with them.

Until other arrangements are made, the pilot survey is being co-ordinated by ourselves (c/o JNCC, Monkstone House, City Road, Peterborough PE1 1JY, UK), from whom further information and forms are available.

We would appreciate ideas and comment from any interested party on either the questionnaire or Nick's paper!

David Stroud
Nick Davidson

Thank you!

Many thanks to all those who have helped recently with all stages of recent *Bulletin* publication:

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